

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By the foregoing amendment, Applicants have rewritten Claim 5 in independent form including the limitations of Claims 1, 4 and 5 and also, pursuant to the Examiner's suggestion, amended the preamble to recite an irrigation connection system. Claims 1, 4, 8, 10 and 11 stand canceled and Claims 2, 3, 6, 7 and 12 have been amended to depend from Claim 5.

The interview granted Applicants' attorney and co-inventor John Riordan on November 16, 2005, is noted with appreciation. At the interview, various aspects of the prior art and the invention were discussed. As set forth in the interview summary, Applicants provided for examination by the Examiner two samples. A first sample included a service tee with machined threads according to the prior art. The second sample embraced the present invention, i.e., a service tee with straight, non-tapered male and female threads. Also noted at the interview and reviewed by the Examiner were several brochures as follows: 1) Harco-Swivel Joint Lateral Connection; 2) Harco Fittings-Swivel Joint Lateral Connection System; and 3) Harco-Swivel Joint Lateral Connection System for Threaded Gate Valves. Copies of these brochures examined by the Examiner are attached to this amendment. Also attached are two photographs illustrating the actual usage of the present invention in the irrigation connection system fluid environment.

As noted at the interview and acknowledged by the Examiner, the Carter reference discloses tapered threads rather than straight, non-tapered threads as claimed. While Applicants remain of the belief that there is no motivation or suggestion in the Carter reference or from the fact that non-tapered threads are per se known for altering the type of thread used in Carter, Applicants have attempted to advance the prosecution of this application by combining the limitations of prior Claims 1, 4, and 5. Also, pursuant to the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants have limited the connection system to irrigation systems.

At the interview, a discussion ensued concerning certain salient features of the invention. For example, it was noted that in irrigation fluid systems it is important to be able to seal while simultaneously enabling the orientation of the second pipe relative to a first pipe while maintaining that seal. Also, it is important that the seal is established at the time the male and female threads first engage one another. That is, since the gasket is engaged by the male fitting when the threads are engaged, the threading action at all times not only maintains the seal but permits the second pipe to be oriented in any direction necessary for connection with, e.g., a lateral pipe. More particularly, this is brought out by the language in prior Claim 5, wherein the distance between the male thread and the open end of the male fitting is at least equal to the distance between the gasket and the first female thread adjacent the female fitting opening.

These dimensional relationships are not disclosed in Carter. In Carter it is apparent that the axial dimension of the cylindrical portion at the end of the male pipe is considerably less than the axial dimension between the first of the female threads adjacent the female opening and the seal. It will be appreciated that tapered threads, as in Carter, also do not permit orientation similarly as in the present invention with the male fitting always engaging the gasket for sealing purposes throughout the entire threading process.

Further, Carter's invention relates to an "effective/substantial" independence of the seal to mitigate the effects of under tightening (important when using tapered threads) or over tightening (this is important for plastic fittings unlike the claimed cast fittings. Plastic fittings, if over tightened will crack. The claimed invention is cast and has straight threads and a geometrical relationship to the seal (embodied in claim 5) so that, for the full range of thread engagement, there is a completely independent seal allowing the benefit of complete freedom of outlet orientation (a benefit not present of cited in Carter). It is also noted that the degree of

tightness is also not relevant in the use of the claimed straight threads for the structural connection function of the joint.

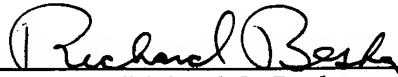
Applicants believe the application is in condition for allowance and request the Examiner to issue a formal Notice of Allowance. If there are any small matters left to be attended to, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned so that the application can be placed in condition for allowance.

Entry of the amendment is also respectfully requested on the grounds that the amendment only rewrites claim 5 in independent form with the Examiner's suggested addition of the word "irrigation" in the preamble. Thus, new issues are not raised and the application is in better form for appeal by the reduction of the number of claims and more limited claim content.

Please grant any extension(s) of time deemed necessary for entry of this communication. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper filed hereafter) to Deposit Account No. **14-1140**.

Respectfully submitted,

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